

Step Therapy Program

The PEEHIP prescription drug program includes Step Therapy for certain medications. The Step Therapy program was implemented to keep PEEHIP sound and to keep premiums and copayments at a reasonable and affordable level. The Step Therapy program applies to “new” prescriptions that have not been purchased in over 130 days. A prescription is considered “new” if the member or covered dependent has not filed and processed the prescription claim through PEEHIP in over 130 days.

Step Therapy is a program especially for people who take prescription drugs regularly to treat ongoing medical conditions such as arthritis/pain, heartburn, or high blood pressure. It is designed to:

- provide safe and effective treatments for your good health
- make prescriptions more affordable
- enable PEEHIP to continue to provide affordable prescription coverage while controlling rising costs

Step Therapy is organized in a series of “steps” with *your doctor* approving your medication every step of the way. It is developed under the guidance and direction of independent, licensed doctors, pharmacists, and other medical experts. Together with MedImpact, Inc., they review the most current research on thousands of drugs tested and approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for safety and effectiveness.

How does Step Therapy work?

First Step: Generic drugs are usually in the first step. These drugs are commonly prescribed, less expensive treatments that are safe and effective in treating many medical conditions. Your copayment is usually the lowest with a first-step drug. It will be necessary for you to use the first-step drugs before the plan will pay for second-step drugs.

Second Step: If your treatment path requires more medications, then the program moves you along to this step, which generally includes brand-name drugs. Brand-name drugs are usually more expensive than generics, so most have a higher copayment.

When a prescription for a second-step drug is processed at your pharmacy for the first time, your pharmacist will receive a message indicating the PEEHIP plan uses Step Therapy. If you would rather not pay full price for your prescription drug, your doctor needs to give you a prescription for a first-step drug. Only your doctor can change your current prescription to a first-step drug covered by your program. To receive a first-step drug: **Ask your pharmacist to call your doctor** and request a new prescription *or* **contact your doctor** to get a new prescription.

With Step Therapy, more expensive, brand-name drugs are usually covered in a later step in the program if you have already tried the first-step drug. If your doctor decides you need a different drug for medical reasons before you have tried a first-step drug, then your doctor can call MedImpact to request a “prior authorization.” If the second-step drug is approved, you will pay a higher copayment than for a first-step drug. If the drug is not approved, you will need to pay the full price for the drug. You can appeal the decision through the appeals process outlined in this handbook.

If you have medical reasons that prevent you from trying a first-step drug, your physician can contact MedImpact to request a prior authorization by calling 800.347.5841. For other questions about the Step Therapy program, contact MedImpact Customer Service at 877.606.0727.

Members who are new to PEEHIP or if a husband and wife switch from one PEEHIP contract to another, they may not be subject to the Step Therapy clinical programs. For these members to be grandfathered into the Step Therapy Program, they will need to provide documentation that they have been on the medication(s) 130 days prior to their enrollment date with PEEHIP.